

## [Charles C. Roberts and I were married]

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Carrizozo,N.Mex.

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MAR 7 1938 [2nd?] PIONEER STORY

Charles C. Roberts and I were married in Mason Texas, September 2, 1875. Mr. Roberts was a farmer when I married him. He was also a minute man, one who helped the rangers fight the Indians. In 1873 or 74 he helped in one of the last fights with the Indians. It took place on Pack Saddle Mountain, about 12 miles from Llano Texas, on the Llano River. They killed most of the Indians and got some of their bows and arrows and a lot of Indian trinkets. We left Llano Texas in May 1880, with our three children, in a covered wagon drawn by two horses. We had all of our provisions with us. There were four other families and six single man in our crowd. Each family had a covered wagon. We camped out at night and when we made camp the men always made a circle with the wagons and put our horses inside the circle and the men took turns standing guard. All the men always wore six shooters and some of them wore two guns. Each man had a rifle that always hung on the back of the wagon seat where they could reach it in a hurry if they needed to, for we were always expecting the Indians to attack us at any time. We had heard so many stories about the Indians killing the white people who were coming west, and we were scared to death all the way out here.

The women did all the cooking. We made sour dough biscuit and corn meal dodgers and baked them in dutch ovens. We used what wood we could find but most of the time we used cow chips to cook with. The only fresh meat we had on our trip was what we killed on the way, cotton tail rabbits and antelope mostly. Once in a while we would buy a piece

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of fresh meat from some of the big ranchers. When we struck the Horse Head Crossing in the Pecos River the men caught some cat fish. We were almost starved for water when we 2 sighted the Pecos River, but when we got to the bank of the river and saw the water was as red as blood, what a disappointed bunch we were. He had to let the water settle before we could drink it and then it was awful tasting and we did not like it. We had to be awful saving with our drinking water an it was a dry year and there was not many watering places. We carried our water in kegs tied to the side of the wagons. Mr. Roberts had the man who carried the mail in a buck board from Government Springs Texas to Fort Stocton Texas, to bring us a keg of drinking water each trip while we were camped on the Pecos resting up.

All the soldiers at Government Springs were negroes. Every time we came to good water we would lay over and rest for a day or so. The women would wash and clean things all up and the men would hunt. We did not see any buffalo or Indians on our trip. We had cow hides swung under our wagons where we carried all our pots, pans, shovels and tongs. I still have one of the rawhide bottom straight chairs that I brought with me on that trip to this country in 1860.

One day while crossing the plains we could see some travelers coming behind us. When they got close enough for us to see them it was a bunch of Mexicans, driving burros to two wheeled carts with canvas tops. We were all scared to death until they stopped and some of the men folks went back to see what they wanted. They had a very sick man and they did not know what to do with or for him. My husband stepped up to the cart and saw that the man had cramp colic, so he came back to our wagon and asked me if I had any medicine that I could give this man to relieve the pain. I had a bottle of Jamaica ginger, so I fixed him up a dose of that and Mr. Roberts gave it to him and it releived him in just a little while. They were all so grateful to us and just could not thank us enough for what we had 3 done for their sick friend.

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From our stay on the Pecos our next stop was at Roswell New Mexico. Roswell consisted of one family, a commissary blacksmith shop. There were five big cotton wood trees. It was noon when we got there and that night there was the hardest rain that I ever saw fall. The thunder and lightning was terrible and we were all scared to death. The water rose to the hubs of our wagon wheels and we tho'ught we would be washed away at any minute. The next stop was at the Casey Ranch on the Hondo River. We bought butter and eggs from them and they gave us a lot of milk. We traveled on up the Bonito River, which was a beautiful sight to us. We passed thro' Lincoln and Fort Stanton and on over to Nogal Canyon. We stayed here two months and the men prospected for gold. While we were here a baby girl was born to Mrs. Irwin, one of the women in our crowd. We fixed her a bed under a big pine tree, of pine needles. We put her feather bed and some quilts on the pine needles and she was very comfortable. She named the little girl "New Mexico".

We went from Nogal Canyon to Lake Valley which was not very far from Silver City. It was a mining town but we did not do any good there so we went on to Georgetown New Mexico, which was on the [Membres?] River. We did not stay there very long and came on back to White Oaks, New Mexico, which was a small mining town at that time. We stayed there until April 1881 and Mr. Roberts decided to send the children and me back to Llano Texas while he scouted around looking for a place to locate. An old man by the name of John Duncan (we called him "Uncle Johnny" ) took us back to Texas in a covered wagon. We passed thro'ugh Lincoln New Mexico the day Billy the Kid killed his guards and escaped. We went thro'ugh there in the morning and he killed them at noon.

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We made our own candles out of beef tallow and wicks out of spun cotton thread. We had our own moulds. Our candles gave out before we reached New Mexico so we tore up old cotton rags and made what we called grease lamps by putting the rags in a tin can and pouring lard over them. They made a good light for one wagon and we depended on our camp fires for light before going to bed.

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I brought my Bible along with as and at night I would read my Bible and we all would sing sacred hymns. Sometimes the men would sing cowboy songs. Mr. Roberts went back to Lake Valley New Mexico, after he sent us back to Texas and staked out a mining claim and did his assessment work on the claim and waited around for awhile to see if he could sell his claim for big money. He got homesick and sold his claim for ten dollars and started out horseback for Texas. He made the entire trip to Llano Texas by horseback. We stayed in Texas for five years. When we returned to New Mexico at the end of that time we found that the claim Mr. Roberts had sold for ten dollars, turned out to be one of the richest which was struck at Lake Valley.

Narrator: Mrs. Alice Roberts, Aged 78 years. Carrizozo New Mexico.